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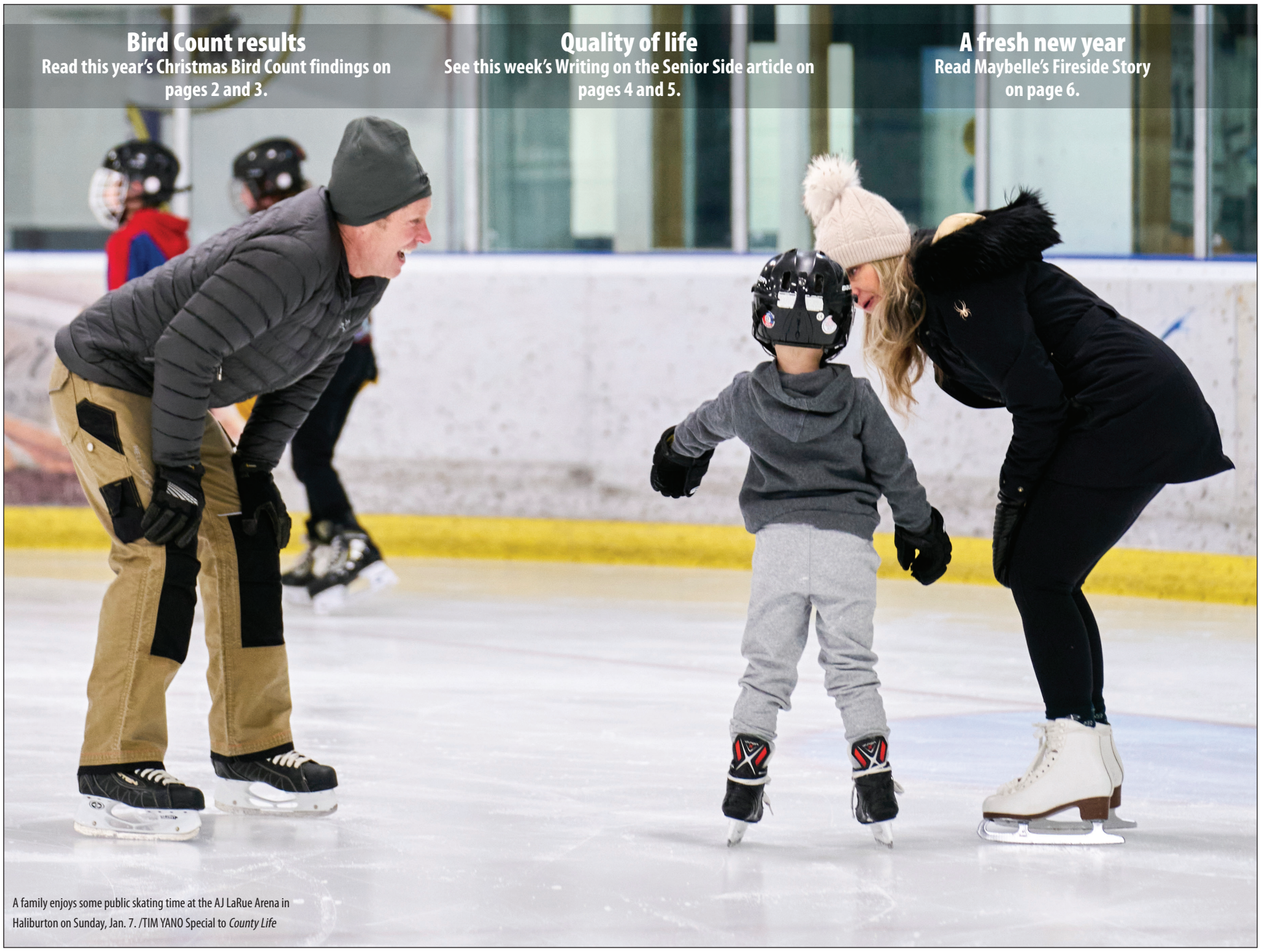
Bird Count results
Read this year's Christmas Bird Count findings on pages 2 and 3.

Quality of life
See this week's Writing on the Senior Side article on pages 4 and 5.

A fresh new year
Read Maybelle's Fireside Story on page 6.



A family enjoys some public skating time at the AJ LaRue Arena in Haliburton on Sunday, Jan. 7. /TIM YANO Special to *County Life*

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Snow Buntings steal the show

ED POROPAT

Special to *County Life*

The 57th annual Minden Christmas Bird Count has come and gone, but to participants, it will not be soon forgotten. The event was held on Saturday, Dec. 16 in near perfect conditions. The morning brought mild temperatures, very little wind, and a dazzling, cerulean blue sky. It was a gorgeous day to simply be outside! Although clouds rolled in by the afternoon, many participants commented on the spectacular conditions. Eleven teams of 31 field counters dispersed throughout the 24 km diameter count circle and 13 feeder watchers observed their feeding stations for any bird activity. By the time dusk fell, the field teams had expended a near-record 96+ total hours of effort, with the feeder watchers providing an additional 23 hours of observations. The collected data provided a nice sampling of what was present in the area on count day.

Quiet feeders

Almost every feeder watcher in 2023 commented on the lack of birds. One long time participant even lamented that despite several hours of observation, his only visitor was a lone Eastern Gray Squirrel! But, the birds were out there, both in diversity and abundance.

Chickadees showed a marked decline in 2023. /Photos by Ed Poropat

They just had no interest in the feeders with the generous amount of food in the forests. Over the course of the day, 48 different species were found (above the 20-year average of 45.9) and a total of 4747 individual birds (well above the 20-year average of 4287). As predicted, the nomadic winter finches were well represented, and the abundance of open water yielded a good diversity of waterfowl. In general, raptor number appeared strong also.

Our usual backyard friends such as the Black-capped Chickadee and the woodpeckers showed declines in detection in 2023. Are these reduced numbers actual or perceived? Are these backyard visitors able to find plenty of food in the woods, and thus, visit less often, or at all? A quick look through the past 10 years of data collected by this count generally supports the fact that during years of good to excellent natural seed production, chickadee numbers appear to be weak. When cone crops fail, these permanent residents flock to the feeders for easy meals. The Black-capped Chickadee (630) population showed a decrease of around 50 per cent this year, significantly down from the 20-year average of 1247 individuals. The woodpeckers, both Downy and Hairy, showed similar declines. The Downy (22) exhibited a 60 per cent decline, and Hairy (42) likewise showed a 50 per cent reduction. The nuthatches, on the other hand, showed slight increases above the average, White-breasted Nuthatch (102) and Red-breasted Nuthatch (134). The Red-breasted Nuthatches were almost certainly undercounted, given the amount of cone crop present. Blue Jay (391) numbers almost equalled the 20-year mean of 387. Other frequent feeder birds such as the Dark-eyed Junco (38) and the American Tree Sparrow (62) were present in near-regular numbers. The inconspicuous Brown Creeper (17) broke the previous high count by one.

Game birds appeared to be in lower numbers this year. 133 Wild Turkeys were counted within the circle, down substantially from the 20-year average of 162, and well below the count high of 280 birds back in 2012. Ruffed Grouse (nine) also had a somewhat poor showing, tallying below the average of 15 birds.

Strong showings

The mild early winter combined with an abundance of seeds and berries in the area created record-breaking conditions for some species. The Red Crossbill, for example, is a nomadic winter finch that follows banner cone crops around the continent. With so many cones on our pines this year, the crossbills have been abundant, and are now likely settling down to breed in the area. This species shows 12 different "types", all with different call notes and varying bill sizes adapted for extracting seeds from different cones. In the west, some specialize on Ponderosa Pine, Lodgepole Pine, or Western Hemlock. With failed cone crops in that part of the continent, many of these birds have drifted eastward, looking for food. The count tallied a total of 57 Red Crossbills, almost as many as the record high 65 found back in 1967 when the first Minden Count was held. Likely, many more were present, but they

This was only the 3rd time Greater Scaup has been observed on the Minden Christmas Bird Count.

appear to have paired up for breeding and are not being very conspicuous now. Smaller finches such as the streaky Pine Siskin (344), the yellowish American Goldfinch (640), and a few pinkish Common Redpolls (44) danced among treetops, feeding on birch, alder, and some conifers. With a bumper crop of Balsam Fir cones, many Purple Finches (134) remained in the area, moving around in small loose flocks. As the winter progresses, the snow deepens, and food becomes scarcer, we may start seeing some of these birds more regularly at our feeders.

The mild weather before the count resulted in many of the larger lakes being ice-free. Thus, some waterfowl lingered in the area. Trumpeter Swans continue their population increase, with a record-breaking 19 being counted this year. A few Common Loons (three) enjoyed fishing in the extensive open water, not feeling the urge to move south just yet. A flock of Greater Scaup (14) were discovered on Mountain Lake, providing not only a record number of individuals observed on count day, but also only the third time it has ever been recorded on the Christmas Count. With creeks and rivers running clear and open, several Belted Kingfishers (4) remained in the area, equalling a record count.

More birds and rodents in our area usually means more accompanying predators looking for an easy meal. The 2023 count was a relatively strong one for raptors. Barred Owls (eight) tied a previous count high. A single adult Cooper's Hawk hunting in Minden was a nice find for one team. Red-tailed Hawks (7) were well-represented this year. An exciting observation was the discovery of two different Golden Eagles south of Minden. These rare winter birds had only been seen on four previous counts, so finding two in a single day was

see page 3

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A single Snow Bunting stops to preen while feeding along the shoreline.

Red Crossbills were present in near record numbers during the 2023 count.

from page 2

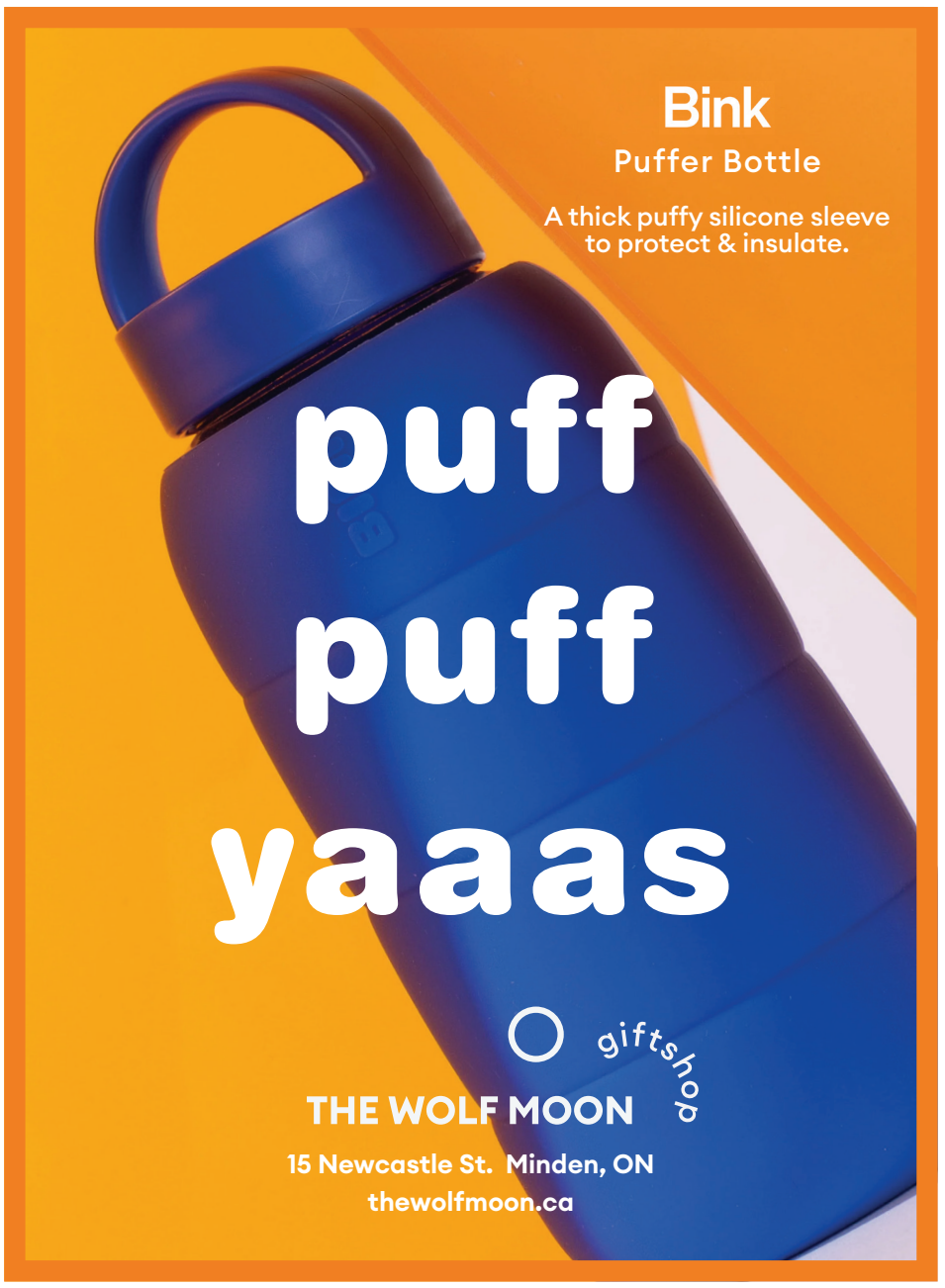
exceptional. Bald Eagles (seven) were also present in good numbers, enjoying the thermals created by the warming sun.

But the stars of the day on this 2023 bird count were the Snow Buntings. These arctic nesting birds are regular visitors in the county each fall. Having been recorded on nearly every count since its inception, seeing or hearing a few is hardly noteworthy. Finding a swirling flock of 500 birds, on the other hand, is simply breathtaking! Likely due to the minimal snow cover in the tilled fields, foraging has been easy for these birds, causing them to remain in the region longer than they normally might. One lucky team discovered a large flock of 450 – 500 birds feeding in a field southwest of Minden. A truly spectacular sight! In total, 718 Snow Buntings were counted, breaking the 1982 record of 711 birds.

Unusual species

No new species were added to the cumulative Minden Christmas Bird Count list in 2023 (it presently sits at an impressive 110 species). Although common during the summer months, a Common Grackle (one) near Lochlin was a nice count-day discovery for one group. Several Northern Cardinals (four) were reported, mostly near Minden. These beautiful birds are regularly observed in southern Ontario once you get off the granite Canadian Shield. Here, though, they mostly rely on feeding stations in the winter to survive, as well as good cover nearby such as thick conifers or cedar hedges. Most Ring-billed Gulls cleared out of the county when the first snows fell, but a single, lingering individual was found on count day by one team. Despite not being found on the 16th, two separate Red-bellied Woodpeckers were observed during the count week within the circle. This species is increasing its population throughout Ontario. An adult Peregrine Falcon was observed hunting pigeons in downtown Minden on the 12th, missing the count week tally by a day. This would have been only the second time it has been seen during the count period.

And that's it for another year! As always, thank you to all the participants for your dedication and efforts. Your volunteer work helps keep a "finger on the pulse" of the avian world surrounding us.



Writing on the Senior Side

Quality of life

GAIL STELTER
Special to *County Life*

Perhaps two years of no falls or broken bones was enough. Perhaps a third year was, indeed, pushing my luck.

The step down onto the ice surface seemed smaller this year. Getting my skating legs seemed easier this year. Skating seemed to flow better this year. I let go of the chair this year. The third year of the Stelter Family Christmas Skate at our local arena was a fun time and another personal success story for my titanium knees. I remember well all those years when skating, dancing, golfing and even walking were difficult. I remember the fear of taking a step and having my knees fail me. There was great improvement after the first knee replacement and the question was posed, "Are you sure you want to go through that surgery again?"

I recall that when I had the first knee done my surgeon said, "Take your pick." I recall that when I had the second knee done he asked me if I played golf. I replied that I do, but not well and he said, "Your knee looks like someone took a divot out of the bone."

But the reason I went ahead with the second surgery is simple. I replied, "I still can't dance. I am doing this."

Peter also likes titanium. His hip replacement surgery, several years ago enabled him to live his life fully and to continue to play golf. Certainly, knee or hip replacement is not without risks. It is a big decision, and we have all heard stories of those who have not fared well with surgery, but we are both grateful for the improved quality of life that has resulted.

Quality of life is a concept that is so very personal. Physical health-related quality refers to the degree to which our bodies are healthy, comfortable and able to participate in or enjoy life events. Mental health-related quality of life refers to the degree to which our minds are free or able to cope with conditions and situations such as depression, anxiety, loneliness, isolation or financial worries.

We are smart seniors who know that there are times when both our physical and mental health can be facilitated by qualified professionals. We are never too old to accept responsibility for improving our quality of life. Sometimes it's big decisions that make us seek out professionals, and sometimes it's little changes and things we can do on our own each day.

An active lifestyle is one answer. This is more than getting in your daily steps. It is doing activities you find meaningful to you and benefit your mind, spirit and body. Be social and get out there and do the things you like to do. You decide. Your active lifestyle will be unique to you. I play bridge with a group and enjoy the social time and the challenge of the game. I am a writer and that is solitary but I am also a member of a writing group that meets once a week. I volunteer (not quite as much as I used to) and the satisfaction of giving back to my community and the social interaction of working with people of goodwill are important to me.

That all sounds nice but…

"I'm tired. I'm going to bed."

"Why? You don't sleep anyway."

Well, that is true and therein lies the "but". Sleep or lack of it is my greatest determinant of maintaining, never mind improving, my quality of life. Sleep is physical. Lack of sleep puts my mental health in danger.

"Have you ever thought about going to a sleep clinic; about participating in a sleep study?"

I did that a long time, ago now. I do have sleep apnea. I was told that apnea occurs when you stop breathing for at least 10 seconds. I had 112 apneas

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Writing on the Senior Side

during the sleep study. The average length was 14 seconds and the longest was 30 seconds. Outfitted with a CPAP Machine (continuous positive air pressure), I think my quality of life will be great now. No so. Back for another sleep study.

"Your apnea is under control. You are still waking up throughout the night. You still take an inordinate length of time to fall asleep. There must be other factors affecting your sleep." Not said: We're done, go home. Have a nice life.

I have read about and tried the various suggestions for getting a good night's sleep and still, I can't fall asleep or stay asleep. I have insomnia as well as sleep apnea. Insomnia is the most common sleep problem in adults over the age of 60. When you have insomnia you take a long time to fall asleep; wake up many times during the night; wake up early and are unable to go back to sleep; wake up tired; and, feel very sleepy during the day.

If lack of sleep sets you up to be irritable the next day, affects your clear thinking and desire to create or maintain an active lifestyle; if it affects the quality of your life, then perhaps some of these tips from the National Institute on Aging might work for you.

Follow a regular sleep schedule. Go to sleep and get up at the same time each day, even on weekends or when you are travelling.

Avoid napping in the late afternoon or evening, if you can. Naps may keep you awake at night.

Develop a bedtime routine. Take time to relax before bedtime each night. Some people read a book, listen to soothing music, or soak in a warm bath.

Try not to watch television or use your computer, cell phone, or tablet in the bedroom. The light from these devices may make it difficult for you to fall asleep. And alarming or unsettling shows or movies, like horror movies, may keep you awake.

Keep your bedroom at a comfortable temperature, not too hot or too cold, and as quiet as possible.

Use low lighting in the evenings and as you prepare for bed.

Exercise at regular times each day but not within three hours of your bedtime.

Avoid eating large meals close to bedtime – they can keep you awake.

Stay away from caffeine late in the day. Caffeine (found in coffee, tea, soda, and chocolate) can keep you awake.

Remember – alcohol won't help you sleep. Even small amounts make it harder to stay asleep.

A final personal tip from me: remember the professionals - medical and mental health professionals are always welcoming of your questions and concerns. And, I am pleased to share that I am sleeping much better these days. I wish you good sleep health and an active lifestyle for a great quality of life.

Night Stripes

Every trunk's an aspen
Now a storm's blown sideways in
Striping lonely hardwoods
Making snow their extra skin
Slamming flakes on uprights
Glowing pale on sombre bark
Even shaggy Jack pine
Becomes birch-like in the dark

While the moon still visits
Just before it fades and sets
Half-trees pose like chessmen
Sending eerie non-regrets
Those who mark a dreamscape
Helpless storybookish view
Sublimate when sky-games
Come to change the dull to new

By Deborah J Reed

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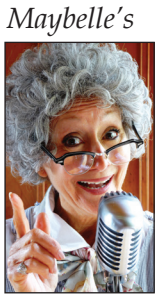
Welcome to 2024, don't tcha know

Maybelle's
Fireside stories



DEAR READER,
Well, here we are with another brand spanking new 365 days ahead of us and the opportunity to be the best or worst of who we can be. Oh yes, we do have a choice, don'tcha know.

Why, ol' Maybelle has seen right here in Lake WhaddayathinkImean the best and worst of how folks treat one another. Some folks live straight from their hearts. They give and spread goodwill and kindness, thoughtfulness and caring, and show empathy for other folks every single day. Oh, that's a big one. My personal favourite. Empathy. Caring about how somebody else feels, putting yourself in their shoes and doing your best to be thoughtful about how you treat them. As the beloved poet, Maya Angelou, said: "People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But people will never forget how you made them feel."

So, my question is: How do you want to make people feel this year? How did you do last year? Were you on Santa's Naughty or Nice list? I'm not being flip. We really do have an opportunity to set good intentions to be more thoughtful toward other folks, don'tcha know. Afterall, what goes around comes around. Give love, and you'll get love. Treat others in a mean-spirited way and it will come back and bite you, you know where.

It all seems so simple to ol' Maybelle, don'tcha know. And I know my good friends, Twindle Mumbly, Vilma Yuccch, Officer Stanley Penelope McBottom, Beanpole Starkman and Sybil Beaucannon Hughes feel the same way. It feels so good to make people smile. And it takes so little to make that happen.

So, welcome to 2024 and the beautiful opportunity to be the best you can be by simply living from a place of love.

Maybelle's Fireside Stories is written by Jerelyn Craden. "Maybelle's Cure for What Ails You," 21 of Maybelle's best short stories is now available at www.amazon.com.

Top 10 reasons why your snowman is not approachable

Snowman season is nearly upon us, In the next few weeks, we will all encounter snowmen who are happy looking and approachable. But there will also be some who are completely unapproachable. Here are the top 10 reasons why.

STEVE GALEA
Humour Columnist

1. Would you want to hang out with a man who only wears a hat and scarf?
2. Those two black eyes.
3. Everyone knows he's just going to leave in spring.
4. He has a reputation for being cold.
5. Not clear what he's smoking in that corncob pipe.
6. He complains about every sunny day.
7. Not sure which snownoun to use.
8. Does not find it funny when you say, "Stay Frosty, my friend."
9. Keeps begging people to drive him north.
10. Carrot in the wrong place.

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Footsteps

Blaze of blue Sky, glazing Snow,
silvering pieces of River that still flow, willows, drooping on its banks,
its wilting tresses, rinsed in gold, by light streaming down from a seamless Sky,
my limbs, not feeling the cold, as I crunch across the crust of Snow, cupping my face
up towards the orb of Sun,
closing my eyes, for a moment, as I pause on the path, feeling the fleeting heat of midday Sun,
brush my cheeks,
inhaling the crispness of Air, not a wisp of Wind, to ruffle its stillness, as I stand here and breathe,
listening to silence, sprawl all around me, winter muting the River's flow,
as I blink my eyes open and peer down at all the dents and dimples in the Snow,
boot prints and paw prints, frozen in the Snow, leaving their mark behind,
'till a thaw melts them away, as if they never came,
or a fresh coat of Snow, cloaks the holes, my feet following the footsteps along the path,
wondering how many tens of thousands of steps have plodded through the Snow,
passing the boot prints of strangers, and maybe people I know,
this invisible camaraderie of walking through winter, breaths merging with Air,
as I stare down at the glare of Snow,
the white, so bright, I glance up at the willows instead, the light weaving through their branches,
in a way that takes my Breath away,
their beauty, more striking in winter, against the starkness of Snow,
their shadows stretching across the path, bruising the boot prints, branding Snow.
I wonder which way I should go, letting my footsteps lead, veering away from the River and its muffled flow,
clomping onto a trail that trickles through the trees, Sun blaring down through the spaces
between their branches,
that once swelled with leaves,
inhaling the pureness of Air and light, as I walk, feeling my lungs breathe, listening to my boots crunch
through Snow,
the only sound I hear, as I near the fork in the trail, listening to my feet as they steer me right,
following the path of boot prints that came before me, paw prints prancing in the Snow, my Breath slowing,
as I pause to drink in the quiet that surrounds me, Snow and trees and light,
pouring down from Sky, blue as a husky's eye,
winter swathing me in a shawl of calm, as the season of stillness begins, my footsteps leading me
through the Snow,
blue shadows smudging its skin, as the earth, sleeps deep sleep, down below,
seeds of peace, frozen in the darkness, dreaming of the world's Awakening

Sylvie Kalenda

Sunday skate

Friends and families gathered at the AJ LaRue Arena for some public skating ice time on Sunday, Jan. 7. Visit calendar.dysartetal.ca/Default/Month?_mid_=1473 to view all public skating sessions. /TIM YANO Special to County Life

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Nature in your backyard

County Life welcomes photo submissions depicting life in the Highlands. Email vivian@ haliburtonpress.com. Please ensure images are high resolution - 200 dpi, 10 inches at its longest edge.

A Blue Jay waits by the feeder. /Submitted by Jill Moulton

A juvenile Bald Eagle. /Submitted by Tammy Nash

Community Events

Send your event listing to classifieds@haliburtonpress.com

TOPS: Take Off Pounds Sensibly
When: Monday mornings
9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion Branch 129, upper level
Admission: Yearly membership of $59
A non-profit/commercial network of weight-loss support groups, offers programs for healthy living and weight management.

Creative Collaborations
When: Tuesdays at 1 p.m.
Where: St. George's Anglican Church. 617 Mountain Street
Share your skills. Learn new skills. Bring your own project or work on the featured project. Beginners Welcome. Contact lynnhiggsthompson@haliburtonanglican.ca for details.

Seniors Chair Exercises
When: Thursdays, at 1 p.m.
Where: St. George's Anglican Church, 617 Mountain Street
Safe and gentle exercises for seniors to help with balance, strength and flexibility. Free to join.

Cribbage and Euchre
When: Tuesdays at 2 p.m.
Where: St. George's Anglican Church, 617 Mountain St.
Please join us Tuesdays for cribbage and Euchre at St. George's Anglican Church. With funding from the Government of Ontario. Please contact lynnhiggsthompson@haliburtonanglican.ca for more information.

Super Cash Calendar Draws
When: Second Monday of the month, 6:30 p.m. January until October.
Where: Haliburton Legion
Three tickets pulled per night. First ticket winner receives $100, second ticket $200, and third ticket $500. Winners will be posted every month on www.haliburtonlions.com. Public is welcome to attend the draws at the Lions meetings in person.

Trappers Workshop
When: Sunday, Jan. 14, 9 a.m to 3 p.m.
Where: Lloyd Watson Community Centre, Wilberforce
Join the Minden District Fur Harvesters and numerous vendors for displays, demonstrations, competitions and door prizes throughout the day. Admission by donation. Lunch available. Food will also be collected for the local food bank. Everyone is welcomed. For further info please contact Ted at 705-448-2877.

Canadian Federation of University Women
When: Jan. 18, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Zoom Meeting
Interest groups in hiking, cuisine, wellness, cards and many more, are yours for the asking, just join your favourites. Open to all, with speakers at monthly meetings and an opportunity to meet others in the community. January hear an update of the Dental Outreach program in Haliburton County. Go to www.cfuwhh.ca or email Gail Gotter (g_gotter@hotmail.com) for more info.

Wilberforce Heritage Guild Annual Meeting
When: Jan. 22, 7 p.m.
Where: Wilberforce Red Cross Museum
The Wilberforce Heritage Guild invites you to attend our 2024 Annual Meeting. Everyone is welcome. Contact Barb Schofield at 705-448-2598 or wilberforcebarb@yahoo.ca

Inspiring Creativity & Empowering Change Conference

Saturday, January 27th 9:00AM-4:00PM

Pinestone Resort, Haliburton

Keynote Speakers
Hereditary Chief Randy Chipps, Dr. Pat Armstrong, Dr. John Lord, Sue Lantz and Danielle Turpin

Agenda:

- **Registration/Service Provider Displays**
- **Emcee Heather Reid (HCDC): Welcome**
- **Traditional Indigenous Blessing for the Conference**
- **Keynote Presentation: Indigenous Perspectives in Elder Care with Randy Chipps**
- **Keynote Presentation: "Putting Life into Years" with Dr. Pat Armstrong**
- **LTC Advocacy for Change in Haliburton County HHHS Hyland Crest/Pat Bradley**
- **Lunch (provided) and Service Provider Displays**
- **Keynote Panel: Time for Transformation**
  Expanding community based options for healthy aging in Haliburton County A discussion with John Lord, Sue Lantz and Danielle Turpin
- **Intergenerational Perspective: The creativity and involvement of our local youth - Rotaract/Interact**
- **Open Space - Community Creativity led by Barnes Management/Re:Think**

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For More Information and to Register:
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Nature in your backyard

County Life welcomes photo submissions depicting life in the Highlands. Email vivian@ haliburtonpress.com. Please ensure images are high resolution - 200 dpi, 10 inches at its longest edge.

A Barred Owl watches its surroundings on New Year's Day. /Submitted by Karen Wood

A beautiful Blue Jay. /Submitted by Tammy Nash

HALIBURTON COUNTY HUSKIES

Home Game

BURLINGTON CHARGERS VS HALIBURTON COUNTY HUSKIES

Saturday, Jan. 20 - 4 p.m.

Upcoming Home Games

Saturday, Jan. 27
4 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 10
4 p.m.

S.G. Nesbitt Memorial Arena

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Legion Events

Branch 129 Haliburton

Mondays: Bridge every Monday, 1 p.m. Schofield Rm.
Tuesdays: League darts starting at 7 p.m. Haliburton Army Cadets practice 6:30 to 9 p.m. (Sept to June)
Wednesdays: Bid Euchre 1 p.m. start – Main Hall. Bingo doors open at 6 p.m. Bingo starts at 7 p.m. $500. Follow Facebook.com/Branch129 Bingo for the most up-to-date information
Thursdays: General Meeting third Thursday of the month, starting at 6:30 p.m. All members urged to attend. Ladies Auxiliary last Thursday of the month at 1 p.m.
Fridays: Meat draw has five draws, five prizes each draw, first draw at 4:30 p.m., last draw at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are $2 per draw. Ed Pickard, MC.
Friday fun darts from 4:30 p.m. and onwards.
Saturdays: 50/50 Draw 4 p.m. draw – tickets are $1 each available in the Clubroom.
Whether you're planning a function for 10 or 200, for more information call Cheryl Waller at 905-447-7741, email haliburtonlegionrentals@gmail.com or visit haliburtonlegion.com. Come on out and support Haliburton Legion Branch 129 ... everyone is welcome!
Club room hours: Mon. 3 to 6 p.m., Tues. 3 to 9 p.m., Wed/Thurs. 3 to 6 p.m. Fri. 3 to 7 p.m. and Sat. 3 to 6 p.m.

Branch 636 Minden

Lunch - Monday to Friday
Monday: Rug Hookers every second week. Bid Euchre 1 to 3 p.m.
Tuesday: Food 5 p.m. Canoe FM Bingo 6 p.m.
Thursday: Cribbage 1 to 3 p.m., Darts 7 to 9 p.m. and Euchre 7 to 9 p.m.
Every other Friday: Karaoke 8 to 11 p.m.
Friday Fish & Chips & Wings. Lunch 11a.m. to 2 p.m. and Dinner 4 to 7 p.m.
Saturday All Day Breakfast 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with three Meat draws at 11 a.m.
Call ahead any day for take-out: 705-286-4541. ***Schedules are subject to change without notice. Check our Facebook page Minden Legion Branch 636 for more info.***

Wilberforce

Jan. 11 - HHHS Social 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Open 2 to 6 p.m.
Jan. 12 -Senior 55+ Lunch at noon Open 2 to 9 p.m.Fish/Chips 5 to 8 p.m.
Jan. 13 - Open 2 to 6 p.m.
Meat Draw 3 p.m.
Jan. 14 - L.A. Breakfast 9 to 11 a.m. Closed after Breakfast
Jan. 15 to 16 – Closed
Jan. 17 – Open 2 to 6 p.m. Darts 2 p.m.
Pat & Phyllis Gallen Fish Derby weather and ice permitting
Saturday, Jan. 20 - Registration up to 9 p.m. at the Legion Jan. 19, or until 10 a.m. Jan. 20 at the Wilberforce Service Centre. Weigh in 3 to 6 p.m. Hot Chili for sale during the weigh-in for hungry fishermen.
If you are planning an event our Ladies Auxiliary would be pleased to cater Call the branch at 705-448-2221 to arrange your event.

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435 VOLUNTEERS

The Minden Community Food Centre, your local charity that works to reduce food insecurity in the surrounding areas, is seeking new volunteers to join our Board of Directors. We are looking for a compassionate person with strong communications skills and a supportive team player to help us achieve our mandate to provide supplemental, healthy foods for our clients living in Minden Hills. If you have skills, time, and experience in any of the following management disciplines: general administration, financial, asset campaign, or social media, plus the desire to help, we would like to hear from you by January 5 2024. Please contact us by e-mail and tell us about your interests in food insecurities, program ideas to support our mandate, your background, skill set, and experience. Send your e-mail to mcfc.BoardMembers@gmail.com.

540 COMING EVENTS

Trappers Workshop
Sunday, Jan. 14 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Lloyd Watson Community Centre in Wilberforce. Join the Minden District Fur Harvesters and numerous vendors for displays, demonstrations, competitions and door prizes throughout the day! Admission by donation. Lunch available. Food will also be collected for the local food bank. Everyone is welcome to attend. For further info please contact Ted at **705-448-2877**

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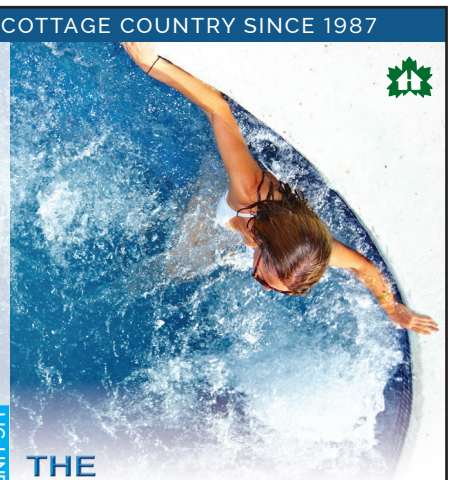

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Computer networks funding approved

by Andrew Milne

Seven schools in the local board of education will be outfitted with cable for local area networks as of the summer of 1995.

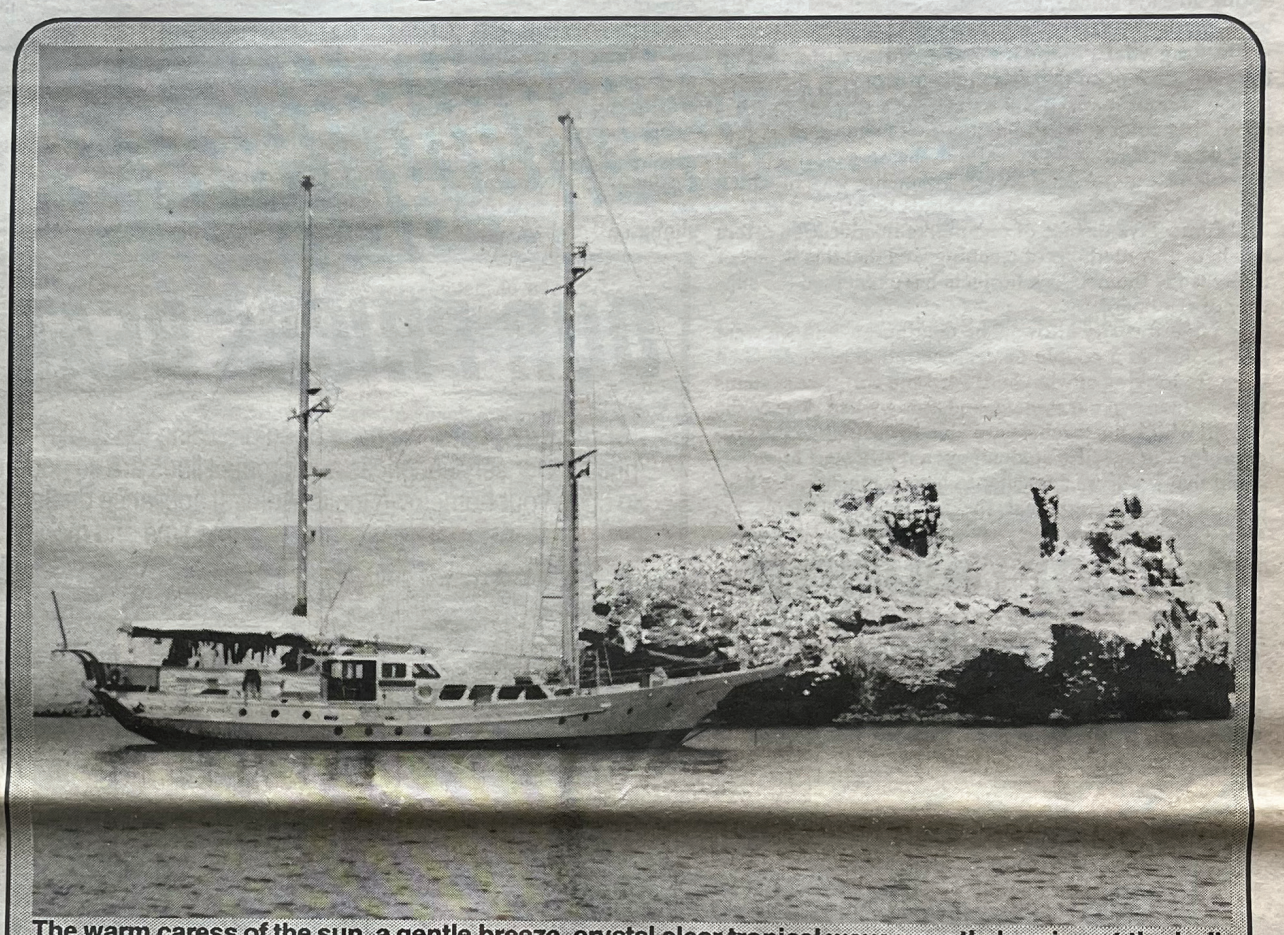
The $236,000 project, funded under the Canada/Ontario Infrastructure Works program, will involve Haliburton Highlands Secondary School, J. Douglas Hodgson Elementary School, Dorset Elementary School, Gooderham Elementary School, Archie Stouffer Elementary School, Wilberforce Elementary School, Cardiff Elementary School, and the board's head office in Haliburton.

The local area networks — in which the computers at a single location or building are cabled together so they can rapidly and easily share information, will eventually all be linked into a single wide area network, so that computers at one school can share information with computers at another location altogether, says board of education chair John Munro.

There are a number of advantages to having the networks in place, says Munro.

First of all, he says, it saves money on hardware. With the network in place,

(more on page 2)



The warm caress of the sun, a gentle breeze, crystal clear tropical waves gently lapping at the hull of the ship, cares slowly slipping away like the feathery clouds across the azure sky....no this isn't Minden and this photograph is probably just about as close to this halcyon setting as most of us will get this winter. However, this is where Kirsten Anthon, daughter of Anson, Hindon and Minden Reeve Jean Anthon and Ted Anthon, goes to work. She is a member of a team studying the habits of whales in the Pacific Ocean. The story of her work, far from the cold and snow of the Haliburton Highlands, starts on page 6.
Photo by John Atkinson

They're coming to Minden from across North America

January 21 and 22 is fast approaching and entries are coming in from across North America for the 1995 edition of the Minden Techni-Cal Challenge Sled Dog Derby.

Three competitors who have already registered for the 11th annual event are from the three southwestern-most states in the U.S.

Leigh Manning of New Mexico has three teams entered, while Charlie Odegaard of Arizona has two teams signed up and Ralph Whitten of California will be back with his team.

A little closer to home are Pennsylvania's Rob Downey, Ed Clifford of New Hampshire and Terry Killam of Massachusetts. Prince Edward Island's Ron Bernard is also a confirmed competitor.

Reigning champion Neal Johnson of Rothsay, Minnesota is not expected to return to defend his title this year. He is scheduled to be in Alaska at the time of the Minden event.

The Levesque brothers, Paul-Emile and Wilson from Quebec will be competing and the husband and wife team of Stu and Michelle Ostoff of Minnesota have also indicated that they will be back.

Of course, local sled dog racers Steve and Val Lougheed will be in the thick of the competition again this year.

Stu Brandon, one of the organizers of the event, says he expects at least as many racers as last year. Registrations to date reinforce that prediction. He added that no entries from either Alaska or British Columbia have come in yet, but some are expected from the western part of the continent before the deadline of January 18.

The Minden event is the largest limited class sled dog race in the world.

"If you want to win the big money and get the big points, you have to come to Minden," Brandon said.

Even with the talent and vast geographical area already represented, Brandon said: "We should start seeing entries coming in hot and heavy any day now. There's always a flurry as the deadline gets close. After the first of January we get several every day. So far, we have about what we'd expect for this time of year.

"Sled-dog racing is really growing by leaps and bounds," Brandon added. "There seems to be a real increase in interest in the sport."

The professionals

Sled-dog racing is like anything else: there are the wannabees and there are the professionals. And as always, the professionals —both the drivers and the dogs — make it look easy.

Imagine handling a vehicle with no steering wheel, modest brakes, and a throttle stuck wide open. Your only control is the rapport you have with the engine. You've built that rapport over months of daily care and training. On race day, it all has to come together.

Fortunately, the dogs are professionals too. They do this for a living and they take their responsibilities seriously. They've been bred to it for generations and trained to it from an early age.

Like human athletes, some canine physiques are more suited to success in sports than others. The fastest dogs are a husky/hound cross called Alaskan or polar huskies. They are on the small side compared to most people's idea of a husky — about 45 pounds — and lean like a human marathon runner.

The Minden Techni-Cal Challenge offers professional sled-dog racing at its best. It combines the most challenging race course on the continent and the largest purse in North America. As a result, it attracts the top professional sled-dog racers and the finest canine athletes from across Canada and the United States. They compete for money — $25,100 provided by race sponsor Martin Pet Foods — and for maximum points towards international medals.

So accept no substitutes. Insist on the real thing when it comes to Minden's Main Street on January 21 and 22.

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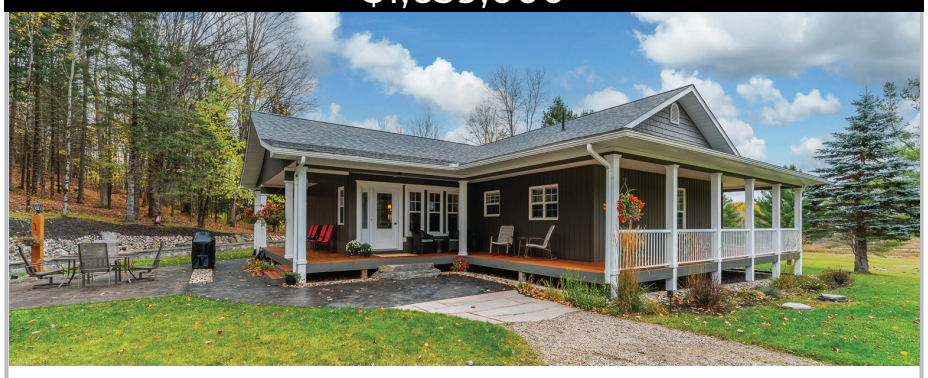

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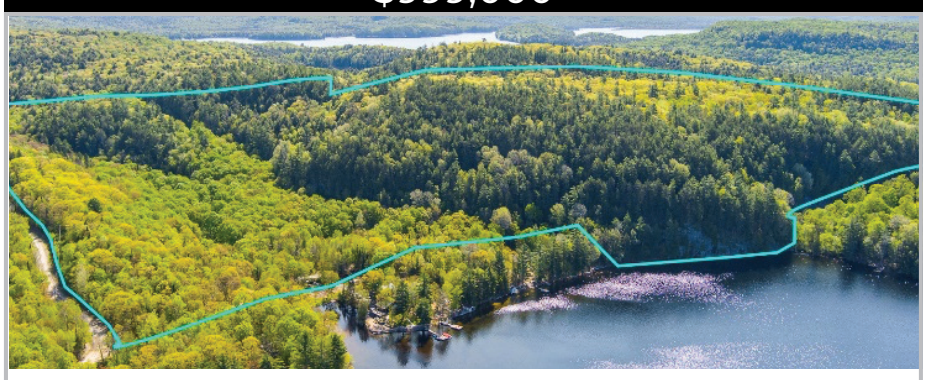

169 ACRES | 3 X BED | 2 X BATH | SOUTHWEST EXPOSURE

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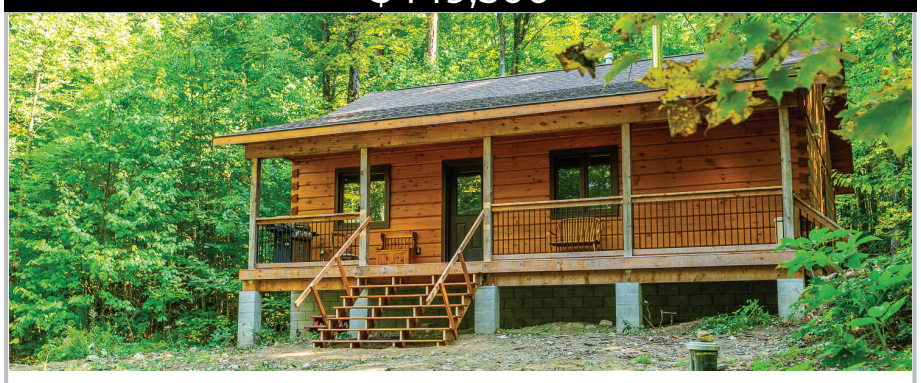

2.76 ACRES | 3 X BED | OFF GRID | 1 X BATH

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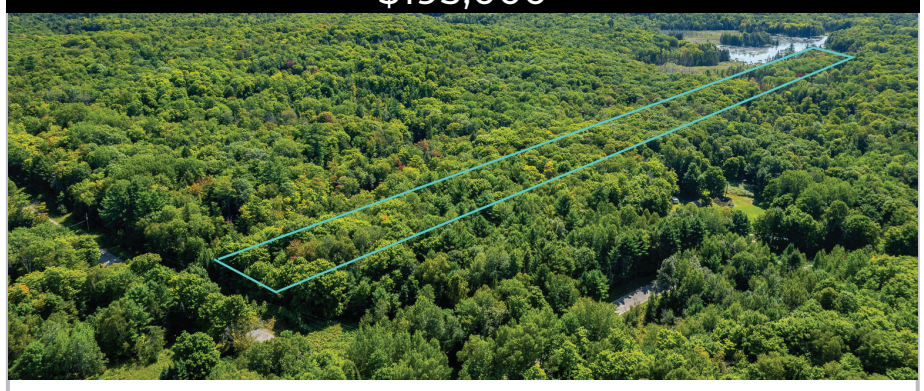

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